

Life today

Do you wear a school uniform, a sports strip or a club outfit? A uniform means that other people can quickly identify us. It also reminds us of the group we belong to and encourages us to work together, each playing our part.



Imagine

A Roman soldier wearing full armour – a well-known and powerful uniform at the time of Paul.

Soldiers were trained to fight in the army, and they helped the Romans to rule over many countries in their Empire. Many people would have been afraid of them, but Paul chooses to use this picture when talking to the new Christians in Ephesus. He is describing how God gives them powerful protection and encouraging them not to be afraid. Their 'armour' is not for fighting people, but for standing against things that are wrong in the world. Paul tells them that God's love for them makes them as strong as the strongest person they know, and that they must use this strength to share God's message of peace.

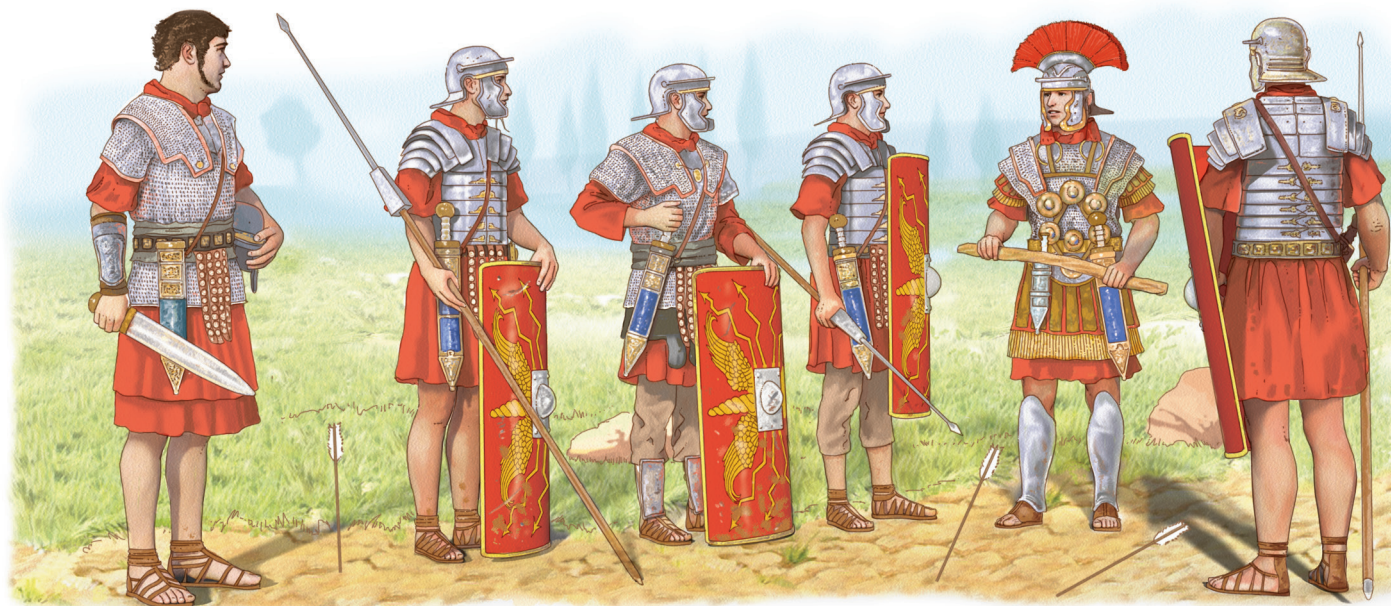
Did you know?

Paul's description of the five pieces of defensive armour (belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet), plus a sword, is quite close to what a Roman legionary or foot soldier would have worn. Breastplates varied – some were chain mail, some had overlapping plates of metal, and some were one solid piece, moulded to fit the chest. Helmets were made to fit the head closely to provide maximum protection, and the heavy-soled sandals were called 'caligae' (pronounced *cal-ee-gay*).



Paul's letter to the Ephesians

A nugget to explore with children: Chapter 6, verses 10, 11a, and 15.



Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.